



SUPPORTERS INFORMATION PACK

SMALL

charities
coalition

www.smallcharities.org.uk

Our Vision

Small charities have access to the skills, experience and resources they need to achieve their aims.

Our Mission

To develop a matching service that draws on a coalition of small and large charities, supporter organisations and partners for the resources it needs.

Our Aims

- Match small charities with other organisations to increase resources or improve knowledge and skills.
- Provide support, guidance, encouragement, advice and information to small charities. We want to support small charities in ways that are creative, reflect good practice, strengthen governance and increase impact.
- Provide a forum for small charities to get their voices heard within the media and with Government.
- Ensure that the matching service becomes sustainable

Get free professional development for your staff and help small charities survive and thrive.

Times of economic uncertainty make spending vital funds on staff development a tough sell but ensuring your staff are challenged can be a key factor making your organisation resilient and flexible in the face of adversity.

Read on to discover the benefits to your organisation of supporting the Small Charities Coalition, and the positive impact you can make on small charities in the UK.

How it all began

The Small Charities Coalition was set up in 2007 and received charitable status in January 2008. It was set up by Patrick Cox as a direct result of the difficulties and frustration he experienced in setting up his first charity. Patrick believes that through the Small Charities Coalition we can change this for other charities.

Small charities can struggle to find people to support them and can find it difficult to raise sufficient funds to get projects going and enable longer term plans and commitments to be made. Legal requirements and regulatory frameworks can be complex. The skills and knowledge any individual will need to run a charity are diverse and possibly difficult to muster. Small charities simply do not have the money to buy in the skills. However each small charity does have something to offer. By sharing what they do have, they can support each other and inspire others to help.

With over 170,000 charities in the UK charity sector and small charities (income less than £1million) making up 97% of these, the potential is huge *(Source: NCVO Almanac 2008 (2006/07 statistics))*

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How the matching model works

Small charities sign up online and identify their need for support (we call these small charities friends). We match them with another charity or other organisation that can meet that need. In return they donate their own time back to the Coalition – in effect like a voluntary sector matchmaking service, but without the subscription costs, or heartbreak!

We want medium and large charities to join the Coalition too and underpin this support framework. We call you supporters! The model works on the basis that all charities have something to offer another charity and can help them grow and develop according to their aspirations to meet their objectives.

The support provided from friends and supporters might be mentoring, sharing key staff with a particular expertise, sharing resources, coaching or giving advice and guidance on specific problems, as well as providing moral support. Some supporters may also become trustees for a small charity.

How it works for your staff

Staff members will need to go onto our website and sign up through our supporters' registration survey. Here they provide us with personal details and information on the skills and experience they have, and would like to share with small charities. We use this information to match them to a small charity, based on (but not limited to) geographical location, level of expertise and personal requirements.

We normally find a small charity in need of a staff member's skills within three months (but usually much sooner) and facilitate an initial discussion between them and the small charity. The match may address a particular issue, or continue with a more in-depth relationship that develops into a mentoring or coaching role.

- Depending on the nature of the problem and initial discussions had, matches can last anywhere between two weeks and six months, or ongoing if they and the charity would like support to continue. Support is at hand from Small Charities Coalition staff, and we will keep in touch with both staff member and charity throughout the match. All conversations are treated in the strictest of confidence.

Once staff members and their charities feel their objectives have been achieved we will evaluate the match. If staff members are happy to continue, we'd be delighted to match them again. Equally they are free to continue their support for their small charity in a mentoring and/or coaching capacity. They may even decide to become a Trustee of that charity.

Why your organisation should get involved

Employer-supported volunteering has a host of benefits for your individual staff members, including:

- Development of new skills through mentoring, consultation and coaching
- The opportunity to enhance existing professional skills and gain further experience by using them in a new area or in a different way
- Improved self-confidence through advising and supporting others
- If they also choose to become a trustee, there may also be an opportunity to be involved in the strategic management of an organisation

The knock on effects for your organisation as a whole could be incredibly valuable, such as:

- Increased staff fulfillment and loyalty
- Increased skills and knowledge base
- Opportunity to enhance organisational social responsibility and give something back to the community
- Potentially decrease staff migration/loss leading to lower HR costs

“The Small Charities Coalition provides a real win win opportunity. Small charities get access to information, advice, and expertise; while our staff get a chance to see what its like for small charities with less resources while developing their ideas and understanding. This is a real staff development opportunity that give us a chance to do something for others.”
(Kevin Geeson, Group Director of Resources, RNIB)

Happy Endings

Real life examples of how the Small Charities Coalition's volunteer matchmaking service could help you

We know just how valuable the work of the Small Charities Coalition can be for all those involved but no one can communicate it better than those who have experienced it first hand. Here, individuals from organisations from both sides of our individually matched volunteer matchmaking service give first hand accounts of how it worked for them.

Benefits To Small Charities

David Hartley, XLP Research Trust

XLP affects only boys and is life taking without a bone marrow transplant. Following personal experience of this rare genetic condition, David and his family set up the charity to support others and fund medical research into the condition. They wanted advice on how to make their fundraising sustainable and how to spend funds effectively.

The Small Charities Coalition matched them with Diana le Clercq, former CEO at the Alexandra Rose Foundation.

“Diana understood the issues of XLP not being a particularly ‘sexy’ condition and she’s helped us develop a strategy that will help us tap in to the funding market. I suppose we thought we were always going to be in competition with the big boys that have the professionals doing this but what working with Diana has shown us is that for some trust funds we’re actually what they’re looking for!

We got access to an excellent mentor who could look at us critically and see how we could take the organisation forward. Having that external, knowledgeable view of somebody that’s done it before but in a slightly different context was just fantastic. It enabled us to see beyond our own blinkered perceptions and to see that we could take this on. Each charity has strengths and, let’s be honest, we all have weaknesses. I think working together and supporting each other through the Small Charities Coalition can actually enable us to help each other grow and make a big impact in the areas that we are passionate about.”

Tom Hoyle, Development Manager

Project Harar is a small charity for children in Ethiopia with facial disfigurements. This fast growing organisation was looking to expand quickly but in a sustainable way. The Small Charities Coalition matched them with Meggie Chezsney, the Director at Child Health International, a health organisation that improves child healthcare in several countries.

“It was great to learn from a medium sized charity, about half million pounds bigger than ours, with projects in many countries. What we talked about most was governance and communicating to trustees. We talked about forming partnerships agreement with hospitals and general advice on fundraising and bringing in new staff. I got the advice of a good medium sized charity as a small charity that wants to grow fast, maybe miss out a few steps.

The things that we looked at the most and were really beneficial for me was getting her templates for policy, so we wrote a child protection policy in a week whereas it may have taken months to research and work out the best way of doing it. The interesting thing about that was their child protection policy was borrowed from a much bigger organisation, Save the Children and so we're going down the runs and applying what's relevant to our charity from having got advice from much bigger ones.”

Benefits to supporters

Jonathan McDonnell, British Red Cross

Jonathan was matched by the Small Charities Coalition with the North East Lincolnshire Motor Project who wanted advice and help on the future direction of the organisation.

“I've learnt a lot about myself from this experience. I've learnt that I have a lot of skills that I probably didn't realise I had or haven't used for quite some time and that I have the benefit of a lot of expertise I can call on within my own organisation. Perhaps the biggest and most pleasant surprise came from looking at another charity other than the one I work for. People working in smaller charities have to be jacks of all trades and it's also been great to be able to meet some of the beneficiaries face on. It's fun.

I think there is a lot to share and a lot to learn. You'll learn a lot more about yourself and about other organisations, you'll increase your skill base too and it could actually help you if you wish to go down the trustees/chief executive route – it'll give you a new suite of skills. The days have gone when any one single charity can provide all of the answers. We all now have to work together to enable communities to find some of their own solutions. It's about involving the whole of the third sector, large and small, to share experiences, share learning and to work together.”

John Cropper, Oxfam

John was matched by the Small Charities Coalition with a small arts education organisation called Web Play. John worked with Web Play's CEO to strengthen and define organisational values, create a sustainable organisational development strategy and understand how to use resources to best effect.

“I've learnt a great deal through working with Web Play: about the immediacy of problems that small charities face, the resourcefulness they have in facing problems, how they are able to sort of mobilise staff and supporters to get something done. Working with small charities is a way to help mobilise some of my knowledge, skills and experience and put it to use to help a small organisation. Especially in the current economic climate, when so many organisations are suffering, trying to help a small organisation do better and do more is very, very rewarding. I feel like I've made a contribution.

Volunteering through the Small Charities Coalition is a chance to develop the staff of larger charities; to give them exposure to what is happening in the charitable sector in the UK. It's an opportunity for them to develop their coaching and mentoring skills and to learn about the problems that other organisations face. Enabling the individuals to get exposure to life in a small charity, to feel better about what they are doing in their professional lives because they are making a difference in the sector and for the organisation, in turn, to make a difference - that's an invaluable benefit in terms of staff development and organisational development just for the cost of some time.”

What next?

So you've seen the potential benefits to your organisation, your staff, small charities and the UK charity sector as a whole, and you want to get involved. So what next?

Ideally it is best for us to have single point of contact in each organisation who can liaise internally with relevant staff members, i.e. between teams, with internal communications and HR staff. This means that the scheme can be promoted quickly and most effectively.

Alternatively, you can promote the Small Charities Coalition in a whole host of ways including:

- We can come in and talk to your staff
- We can provide material for you to promote us through your intranet
- We can provide material for you to promote us via email
- We can provide posters and/leaflets to distribute

Templates, logos and downloads to promote us to your staff are available on our website.

For more information and to sign up your organisation to the Small Charities Coalition visit us at www.smallcharities.org.uk/supportus/

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